

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2011-2012 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

LCCMR ID: 209-G

Project Title: Local Communities Launch Native Garden Commons Education Sites

Category: G. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ \$33,000

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 1 yr, July 2011 - June 2012

Other Non-State Funds: \$ 0

Summary:

We will educate Minnesotans about native plants by creating 8-10 Native Garden Community Commons sites. Each site will reach 300 people a year through hosts, workshops, signage, and media outlets.

Name: Ami Voeltz

Sponsoring Organization: Do It Green! Minnesota

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Location

Region: Metro

Ecological Section: Minnesota and NE Iowa Morainal (222M)

County Name: Hennepin

City / Township: Minneapolis

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ Employment	_____ TOTAL _____%

Local Communities Launch Native Garden Commons Education Sites

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

Commons were traditionally defined as the elements of the environment - forests, atmosphere, fisheries or grazing land - that we all share. These are the aspects of the environment that no-one owns but everybody enjoys. This project will help to recreate a commons area for local communities while educating residents through hands-on techniques about environmentally friendly landscaping and gardening. We will utilize community building strategies to bring together residents and businesses through planning, designing, planting and maintaining native garden sites in highly visible areas in the Mississippi watershed.

The Native Garden Commons areas will offer education about native plants and their environmental benefits including; * Water quality - stormwater runoff is currently our nation's biggest water quality threat * Water conservation – native plants need very little water to maintain even through dry periods and require no pesticides or herbicides to keep them healthy * Shoreline erosion – natives decrease erosion by anchoring soil on shore * Wildlife preservation – native gardens provide a natural habitat as well as nectar, pollen, and seeds for bees, butterflies, birds and other wildlife.

Do It Green! Minnesota's mission is to help bridge Minnesotans from learning about sustainability to actually doing it. We will educate and motivate citizens about the importance of incorporating native species into their landscapes through the Native Garden Commons Project. Our organization is currently implementing a project funded by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization called the Rain Drop Project, which includes seeking host sites and partnering them with artists to install a variety of rainwater catchment systems and interpretive signs in public spaces. We would like to expand the education from just water to native gardening at 8-10 of these host sites.

During this project we will be focusing on community building at the chosen sites by engaging and supporting residents and business owners at the host sites to lead the site projects. We will also help to create and implement a plan with each community to educate participants and visitors through workshops, interpretive signs, informational hand-outs, and interaction with trained hosts who live/work at these sites. Both community building and hands on learning have always been an integral part of Do It Green! Minnesota and we are very excited to be able to incorporate these into this project. By partnering The Rain Drop Project with the Native Garden Commons Project we would be able to put the rain barrels to use watering the native plantings and expand the educational reach of both projects. We plan to focus our efforts within the Mississippi Watershed area (see map included) as this watershed is the focus for our Rain Drop Project. The selected sites will allow native plant gardens to be prominently situated in order to reach the maximum number of citizens. We will partner with Energyscapes and Blue Thumb, both of whom we have worked with on past projects, to help us carry out the site research, garden designs and plantings. Team members and community members will assist with the garden planting, creation of the interpretive signage, flyers and promotion of the project in the greater Twin Cities area community.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Seeking and Planting Native Garden Commons Areas. **Budget: \$ 11,000**

Team members and consultants will choose from the 15-25 existing Rain Drop Project rain barrel host sites for the 8-10 native garden sites. Our consultants from Energyscapes and Blue Thumb will evaluate the available land at each site to determine the best sites for this project. We will look for ideal land spaces and highly visible sites that have a motivated community interested in participating in this project.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. The 8-10 sites that would work best finalized	10/15/2011

2. Confirm that the host/owner of each site authorizes the project on their site	3/1/2012
3. Native Gardens at 8-10 Rain Drop Project host sites installed	7/1/2012

Activity2: Create Educational Materials for Hosts and the Community. Budget: \$17,000

Do It Green! Minnesota will create a 10 minute educational and fun You Tube video about native plants, gardens and environmentally friendly landscaping. This video will be used as a training video at host sites, will be promoted in each host site’s community, will be posted permanently on our web site and will be disseminated through our social networking outlets. Interpretative signs and free handouts will be placed next to each garden. A series of workshops will offered during and after the creation of the sites.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Educational video for host completed	6/1/2012
2. Interpretative signage created (\$1,000/sign)	6/1/2012
3. Educational materials distributed to host sites and signage installed (reach 300 people at each site per year)	7/1/2012
4. Host workshop series during the installation process of the gardens (reach 100 people)	9/1/2012

Activity 3: Develop and Execute a Project Dissemination Plan. Budget: \$2,000

Staff to send out press releases, offer stories to the local media, disseminate through local community networks and through Do It Green! Minnesota’s and our partner’s social networking outlets.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Local media and community groups contacted	4/1/2012
2. Communicate project and project outcomes through social media outlets	4/1/2012

Activity 4: Develop a Native Garden Commons Site Maintenance and Follow Up Plan. Budget: \$3,000

Develop and implement trainings to host sites for long term native garden maintenance, and long term strategies for using the site for education. Host sites will be required to maintain their garden and utilize their own funds for replacement plants, etc. Develop a checkup plan for team members.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Educational materials created for native garden maintenance	9/1/2012
2. Check up plan created for each host site	9/1/2012

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

We will partner with the local businesses and residents who agree to host one of our native gardens. We will use grant money to hire Energyscapes and Blue Thumb to assist us with project planning and installing the native gardens. Michael Kooiman, our in-house graphic designer, will be paid using grant money to create educational materials. Team members working on the project will include: Ami Voeltz (Founder and Executive Director), Heidi Meyer (over 2 years with Do It Green!, previous grant project experience), and Eva Lewandowski (1 year with Do It Green!, previous grant project experience).

B. Timeline Requirements

The project will take place from July 2011 – September 2012. We will plan the project and create educational materials and promotions during the fall/winter/spring of 2011 and 2012. The gardens will be created in the spring/summer of 2012 and the project will be complete in September of 2012 with longterm educational plans in place to continue the project past the grant period.

C. Long-Term Strategy and Future Funding Needs

Do It Green! Minnesota will be giving native garden hosts the resources/information to maintain these sites. We will be asking hosts to sign a contract that the host of the garden will be responsible for maintenance and a Do It Green! Team member will stop by periodically while the garden is getting established to ensure that the gardens are being properly maintained.

2011-2012 Detailed Project Budget
Local Communities Launch Native Garden Commons Education Sites

IV. TOTAL TRUST FUND REQUEST BUDGET 1 year

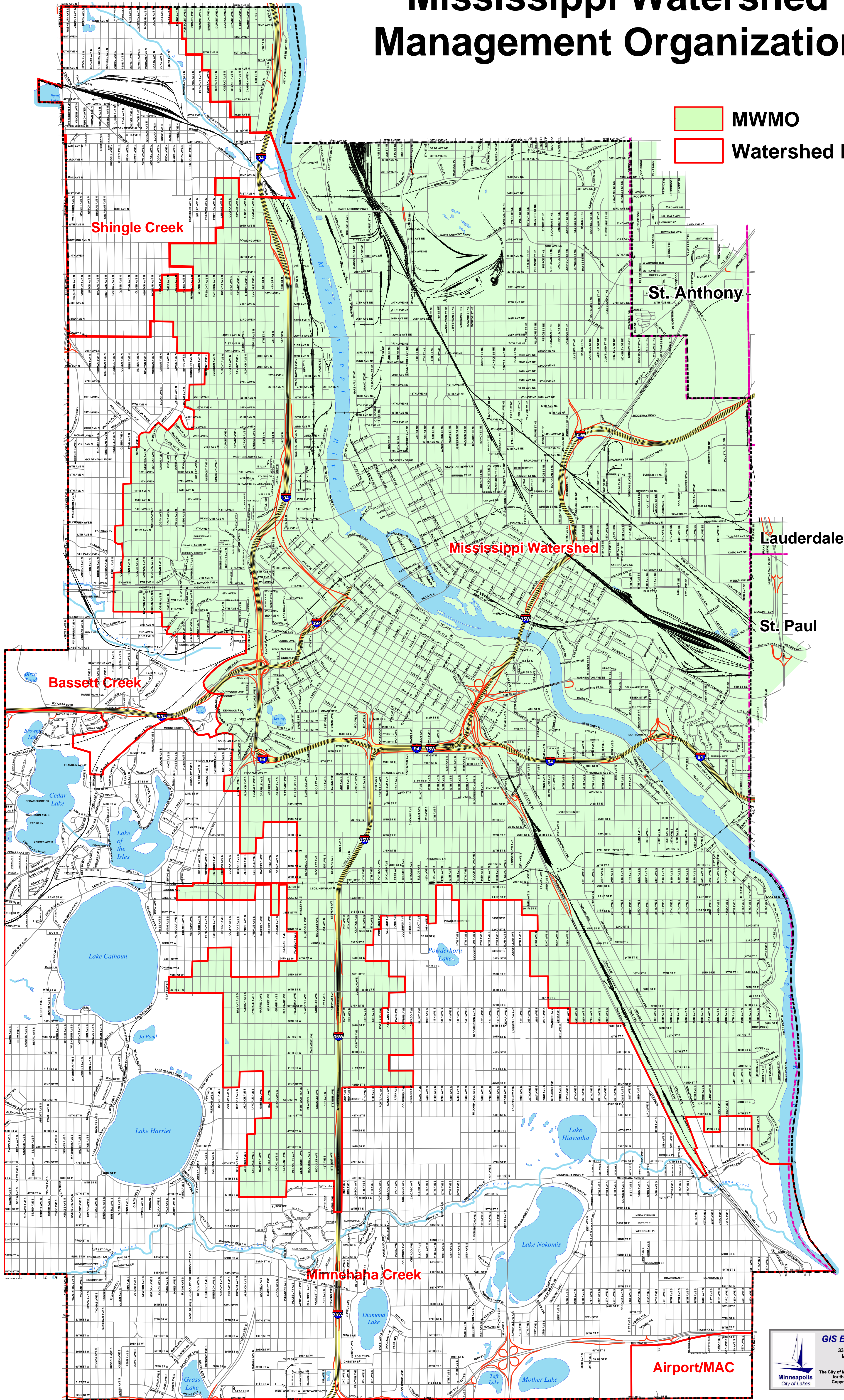
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: Native Garden Commons Project Team Member-Heidi Meyer (over 2 years with Do It Green! with previous grant project experience), Eva Lewandowski (1 year with Do It Green! and previous grant project experience), and one newly hired team member. Team members will be responsible for creating the educational materials (signs, flyers, etc), selecting host sites for native gardens, contact local media and arrange for publicity, and working with hosts and contractors to have these gardens installed. 100% of this money will go towards salary. There will be 3 team member positions that will take place for the duration of the project (July 2011-Sept 2012).	\$ 6,500
Contracts: Landscaping Company/Gardening Organization- We will be asking Energyscapes to serve as a consultant and Blue Thumb to install the 10 native plant gardens on the sites that we identify as able to host these gardens and give the workshops series during the garden creation.	\$ 10,000
Contracts: Mike Kooiman (graphic Designer) We will be asking him to create a logo/advertising material, design flyers and signs, and design a page on our website.	\$ 1,500
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Interpretive Signs - a sign will be at each native garden in order to explain the planting and why it is important for a total of 8-10 signs (each costing about \$1,200)	\$ 12,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: Printing for the educational flyers that will be available at each site and distributed to other local organizations.	\$ 3,000
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements): NA	\$ -
Travel: NA	\$ -
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST	\$ 33,000

V. OTHER FUNDS

SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: NA	\$ -	<i>Indicate:</i>
Other State \$ Being Applied to Project During Project Period: NA	\$ -	<i>Indicate:</i>
In-kind Services During Project Period: During this project Do It Green! volunteers will be assisting with planting gardens (100 volunteers/4 hours each on average). Our executive director, Ami Voeltz, will be acting as our project coordinator and serving as a resource for team members during the execution of this project(100 hours @ \$30/hr). We will also be working to get plant/soil/gardening supplies and food/snack donations from local businesses (estimated \$1,000 worth total)	\$ 8,000	
Remaining \$ from Current ENRTF Appropriation (if applicable): NA	\$ -	<i>Indicate:</i>
Funding History: *Do It Green! Minnesota has recently completed The Foodprint Project, which was funded using a \$10,000 Climate Change Innovations Grant from the City of Minneapolis. This project lasted from April 2009-November 2009. During this project we educated Minnesotans about how food choices play a role in global climate change. We created an educational tools that can be checked out from our resource center as well as held three Low Carbon Cookoffs featuring local chefs at farmers markets and the Midtown Global Market. *The Mississippi Watershed Management Organization has also just granted us a \$10,000 planning grant for our Raindrop Project , which we have just began working on in March of 2010. This grant will allow us to plan our Raindrop Project, which we plan to partner with our Planting Local Roots Project. During the Raindrop Project we will install rainbarrels at host sites as an educational tool for the public to learn about how to use rain barrels and how to get one.	\$ 20,000	<i>Unspent?</i>

Mississippi Watershed Management Organization

-  MWMO
-  Watershed Districts



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Local Communities Launch Native Garden Commons Education Sites

Description of Organization:

Do It Green! Minnesota became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 2000. Our mission is to educate Minnesotans about green and sustainable living and promote healthy communities through our programs and publications. We just completed our fifth edition of the Do It Green! Magazine, a guidebook to sustainable living offering in depth articles and resources written by local experts. We also offer monthly hands-on workshops, the annual Green Gifts Fair in November, a monthly e-newsletter, a database website, "Eco Party" Kits for public check out and a community resource center called the Do It Green! Resource Center. The Do It Green! Resource Center, annual Green Gifts Fair and most of the workshops are located in Mississippi Watershed where we will be carrying out the Native Garden Commons Project. This gives Do It Green! Minnesota a familiarity with our target audience for this project. Over 10,000 Do It Green! Magazines have been sold since 2001, more than 500 individuals have participated in our workshops, 4,500 people attended our 2008 Green Gifts Fair, 1,000 people receive our monthly e-newsletter, and our website gets an average of 10,000 hits per day.

Project Manager:

Ami Voeltz, Executive Director Do It Green! Minnesota and Project Manager

Ami has been working in the environmental/sustainability field for over 10 years. She has experience in working with a wide range of community groups and individuals including work with Minnesota Waste Wise, Macalester Groveland Community Council, SWMCB's Community POWER program and the Living Green Expo. Additionally, she has experience in managing and facilitating work with interns, volunteers and community teams and programs working towards a common goal. Ami has managed a number of similar programs including the Food Print Project funded by the City of Minneapolis and the Rain Drop Project funded by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. In addition, Ami has managed a neighborhood environmental program including a housing improvement grant program that included funding and training for alley beautification, rain garden installations and native plant usage for the Macalester-Groveland community in St. Paul. Ami will be in charge of organizing and carrying out this project as the Project Manager.